



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Alaska Region

P.O. Box 21628
Juneau, AK 99802-1628

File Code: 7710

Date: January 10, 2008

Mr. Eric Taylor
Project Manager
Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
P.O. Box 112500
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Mr. Taylor:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Alaska Statewide Long-Range Transportation Policy Plan (ASLRTPP) update. The Forest Service (FS) recognizes that the ASLRTPP is a high level planning document. The expectation is that more specific area and project plans are to be tiered and provide future details. The following review comments are intended to be equally high level. The Forest Service seeks a shared vision for future transportation plans and related activities supported by this foundation planning document.

The Forest Service recommends that the State augment the draft plan to include a reference section for the Alaska Forest Highway Program. The Forest Highway program, managed by our agencies, mostly benefits rural communities dependent on National Forests. Although small, the program is critical to many rural communities' future because it can convert resource level roads to better service transportation connections. Since the federal funding projections for this program seriously fall short of meeting the identified demand, we encourage the State to consider and recommit to providing State matching funds to the program.

We also request that you add discussion about Forest Development Roads (FDR). These very low volume and low standard roads provide important resource access for economic development to rural communities, enabling resource management, and in some cases serve as primary road access for rural communities. We believe the future of this resource level road network is important to rural Alaska, and especially Southeast Alaska. The State and FS need to continue to work closely to optimize this system to meet our common missions.

We recognize the importance of the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) as part of the National Highway System, and understand the financial strain operating this system places on the State. The ASLRTPP's stated intent for the AMHS is, "in addition to a basic mainline system, provide most service with shorter haul, single-crew routes." The Forest Service will continue to work with the State to identify and plan transportation corridors and intermodal access via Forest lands as appropriate and where necessary to accomplish the AMHS operation limitations.

The Forest Service also requests that the State include wording in the Alaska Statewide Long-Range Transportation Policy Plan which recognizes the Forest Service as a transportation partner. The Forest Service sees this document as an important linkage allowing the FS to tier to the document when it seeks to extend transportation services to our public. The Forest Service is seeking funding authorized by SAFETEA-LU for "Off-System Bridges," "High Risk Rural



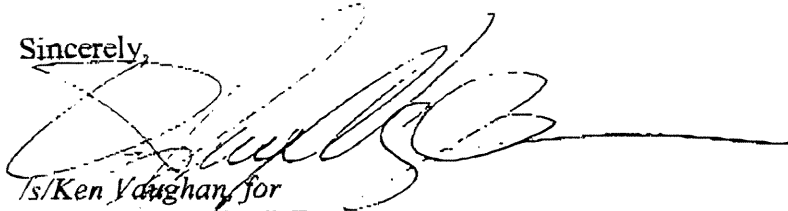
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Alaska Statewide Long Range Plan

Roads," "Scenic Byways," "Transportation Enhancements," and especially the Federal Highway "Public Lands Discretionary" funds.

Comments and questions should be directed to Mary A. Miller, P.E., Regional Transportation Engineer. Ms Miller may be reached at (907) 586-7958.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sam Carlson', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

/s/Ken Vaughan for
SAM CARLSON, P.E.

Director, Engineering and Aviation Management

cc: Kent Kohlase
Larry Dunham
Ruth Monahan
Mary A Miller